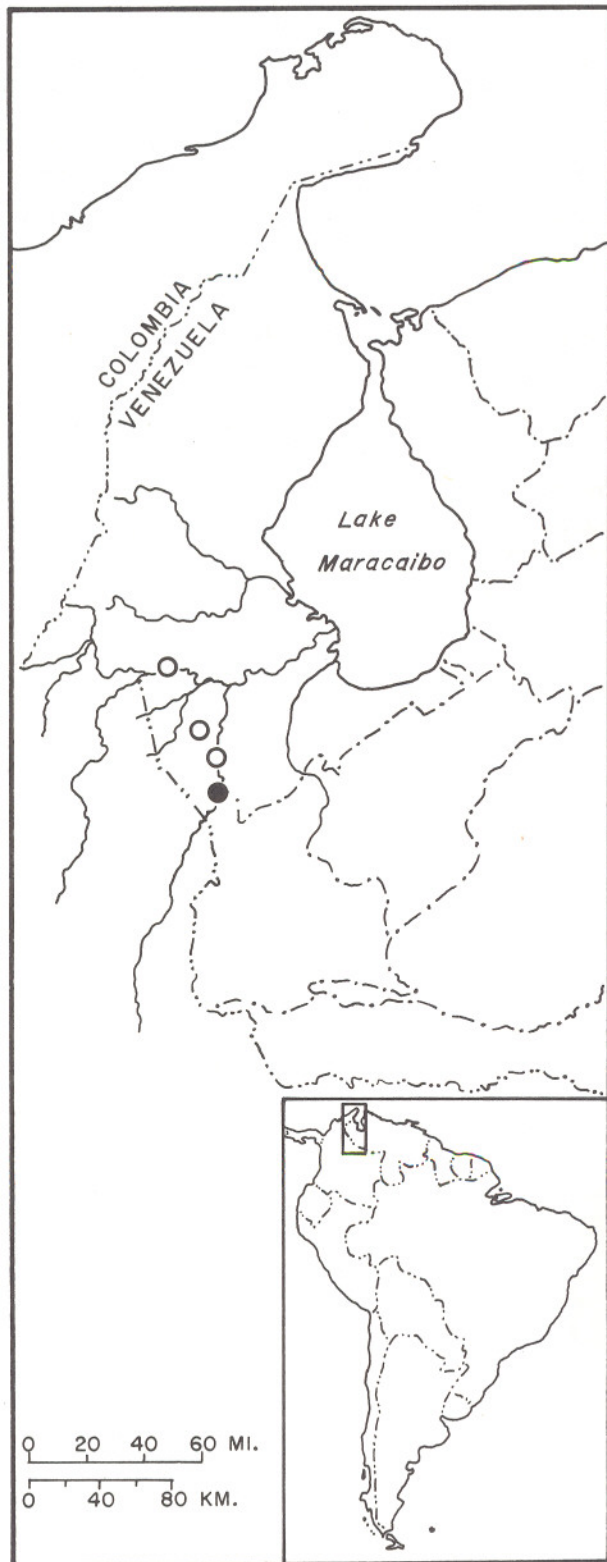


REPTILIA: TESTUDINES: CHELIDAE

PHRYNOPS ZULIAE

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

PRITCHARD, PETER C. H. 1987. *Phrynops zuliae*.***Phrynops zuliae* Pritchard and Trebbau
Zulia Toad-headed Sideneck***Phrynops (Batrachemys) zuliae* Pritchard and Trebbau, 1984:
135. Type-locality, "Caño Madre Vieja near El Guayabo, Dis-

MAP. Solid circle marks the type-locality; hollow circles other reported localities.

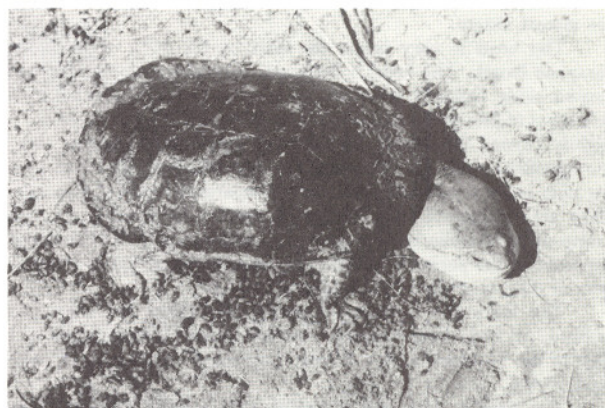


FIGURE 1. *Phrynops zuliae*, adult female. Photograph by Peter C. H. Pritchard.

trito Colón, Edo. Zulia, Venezuela (8°53'N, 72°30'W)." Holotype, Florida St. Mus. Biol. Sci. 53439, adult female, obtained by Edgar Urdaneta, August 1981 (examined by author).

• CONTENT. No subspecies are recognized.

• DEFINITION. Adult males (two known) are 19.1 to 20.8 cm in carapace length, adult females (five known) 24.9 to 27.9 cm. The carapace is oblong, unkeeled, and somewhat flattened; in adult females it may have a distinct longitudinal groove extending along the middle of the 2nd and 3rd vertebrals and the anterior part of the 4th. The carapace of females is nearly parallel-sided, but sometimes is incurved or notched at the level of the 8th marginal; the male carapace is widest at the level of the 8th marginal. The cervical acute is long and parallel-sided or slightly divergent posteriorly. The 1st and 2nd marginals are the highest, the 3rd to 8th marginals being much lower. The 12th marginals are large and much higher mesially than laterally; together they form a strongly convex anterior border. The 1st vertebral is long and wide. The 2nd to 4th vertebrals are much narrower; the 3rd vertebral is the shortest and the 4th the narrowest. The 5th vertebral is 3–5 times wider posteriorly than anteriorly. There are narrow gutters along the sides of the shell, from the 3rd to 8th marginals, especially in adult females. Neural bones are rudimentary to absent.

The anterior plastral lobe is distinctly broader than the posterior lobe, although overall the plastron is narrow, e.g., the posterior lobe width being 32.0 to 33.8% of carapace length. The bridge is narrow, less than 25% of the plastral length. The intergular scute is large and almost as long as wide; it completely separates the gulars and partially separates the humerals. The interfemoral seam is the longest midline plastral seam in adult females and also often in adult males. The interpectoral and the interanal seams are the shortest. The anal notch is deep and angular or slightly rounded, with pointed lateral spurs.



FIGURE 2. *Phrynops zuliae*, head and anterior of adult male. Photograph by Peter C. H. Pritchard.

The plastron lacks sutural contact with the carapace; the axillary buttresses are very strong, abutting without ankylosis against the visceral surfaces of the first costal bones. Inguinal buttresses are almost absent.

The head is very large; its width is 25–30% of the adult carapace length. The head is flattened, anteriorly pointed, and has convex sides. Dorsally it is covered with smooth skin divided by a reticulum of fine grooves into irregular polygons. The snout projects slightly beyond the mouth. The eye is located about halfway along the maxillary scale. The throat is covered with soft, granular skin; the chin bears a pair of simple, widely-separated barbels. The maxillary area is cusped, and the tomial surface at the rear of each ramus of the maxilla bears a strong, hemispherical boss. The dorsal exposure of the parietals is extremely narrow, as is typical of members of this subgroup of the genus *Phrynops*.

The limbs are moderately strong; the digits are short and webbed. All limbs bear numerous curved scales. The unclawed fifth digit of the hindfoot carries a broad flap edged by a series of semi-rigid scales.

The head is dark gray dorsally, with a black line extending from the snout through the eye to above the tympanum. The chin and throat are dull yellow with a dark midventral stripe. The limbs are dull gray. The carapace is unpatterned, dark gray to black; the plastron is dull yellow, with dark infuscation on the bridge and the ventral surfaces of the marginals.

Males are distinguished from females by smaller size, narrower heads, narrower intergular scutes, and much longer, thicker tails with almost terminal vents. Adult males show some orange-pink coloration on the limbs.

● DESCRIPTIONS. The original description (Pritchard and Trebbau, 1984) is the only published one of this species.

● ILLUSTRATIONS. Pritchard and Trebbau (1984) provided a painting of an adult female, and color photographs of adults of both sexes, a plastral view of an adult male, head details of an adult

female, eggs, and habitat of this species, as well as drawings of the skull and shell.

● DISTRIBUTION. The species is confined to the Maracaibo basin of Venezuela, where it is apparently further restricted to the Ciénaga de Juan Manuel de Aguas Claras, between the Río Santa Ana and the Río Catatumbo southwest of Lago de Maracaibo.

● FOSSIL RECORD. None.

● PERTINENT LITERATURE. Pritchard and Trebbau (1984) discuss the type specimens, diagnosis, other comparisons, description, size, distribution, habitat, feeding, reproduction, economic importance, vernacular names, and the incidents that led to the discovery of the species.

● ETYMOLOGY. The specific name *zuliae* is based on the State of Zulia, Venezuela to which the species is apparently restricted.

● COMMENT. Morphologically, this species appears to be most closely related to *Phrynops dahli*, localized in a small area of Caribbean Colombia, and appears to be intermediate between *P. dahli* and the widespread *P. nasutus* in such characteristics as relative plastral width. It is thus assignable to that group of species of *Phrynops* frequently included in the subgenus *Batrachemys*, as is shown by the original form of the published name of the taxon.

LITERATURE CITED

Pritchard, Peter C. H., and Pedro Trebbau. 1984. The turtles of Venezuela. Soc. Stud. Amphib. Rept., Contrib. Herpetol. (2): viii + 403 p.

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Primary editor for this account, Carl H. Ernst.

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